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UNCLAS WELLINGTON 000007

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND SUPPORT TO TSUNAMI RELIEF VICTIMS

REF: SECSTATE 959

11. (U) NZAid has confirmed to post the break down of the NZD 10 million (about USD 7.2 million) that the New Zealand Government has committed so far to the relief effort:

-- Up to NZD 5 million will be given in dollar-for-dollar matching funds for private charitable donations (FYI: The Red Cross here has announced donations to their organization alone so far total \$3.2 million; they expect the total to increase to \$8 million. So we can expect the government will likely pay out the full \$5 million.)

-- NZD 3 million (USD 2.16) will go to the UN Aceh appeal.

-- NZD 2 million will be provided for general relief efforts. This includes NZD 300,000 to provide funding for a New Zealand company operating helicopters in Borneo to conduct relief operations, including reconnaissance, liaison, and light transport. It also includes a police forensic team helping to identify bodies in Phuket.

12. (U) Many New Zealand officials remain on leave this holiday break, and those whom post contacted were unable to tell us whether or not the NZD 10 million includes the funds used to support NZ Defense Force (NZDF) tsunami relief efforts. As of now, there are two C-130 Hercules in the region, airlifting relief supplies and personnel to the affected areas and evacuating refugees out. One C-130 arrived in Sumatra on January 2 with a 30-member NZDF medical team that is working with Indonesian authorities and alongside an Australian Defence Force Health Support Company. The other was deployed on December 28, and as of December 31 had delivered 25 tons of supplies before suffering a crack in its manifold. After repairs, it delivered a water purification plant into Aceh province. A RNZAF Being 757 has been in the region since December 31, carrying Police and Defense personnel to help with victim identification.

13. (U) As of today, there have been two confirmed New Zealand deaths in the Phuket region and one in Sri Lanka. The government remains "gravely concerned" about 17 other New Zealanders, seven whom were thought to have been in Thailand, four in Sri Lanka, four in India, and one in the Andaman Islands. According to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, a total of 737 New Zealanders remain unaccounted for overall.

14. (SBU) Although none of the confirmed or feared New Zealand casualties have been in Indonesia, that is where the bulk of NZ assistance has been directed. This apparently reflects the government's assessment of where the need is greatest, as well as the fact that the military aircraft being used to deliver assistance can most easily reach Indonesia from New Zealand and Australia.
Swindells